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Summer treat grown where roots run deep page 11



Fuel for Full Days of Learning page 14



A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.



"The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957"

Meetings set for **Cotton Electric** Districts 2, 6 and 8

By The Current Staff

VOLUME 66

District meetings for three of the nine voting districts of Cotton Electric Cooperative have been set for the purpose of electing trustees and for reports involving other business matters.

The business and affairs of Cotton Electric are managed by a board of nine trustees representing geographical districts with similar densities of service. The board establishes the overall policies of the cooperative. Each trustee is a co-op member who represents one district, the area in which he or she lives.

The cooperative's bylaws stipulate that District Meetings are to be held in three of the nine voting districts annually. This year, members residing in Districts 2, 6 and 8 will receive mailed notices that will include information about the time, date and location of the meetings they should attend. Only members in these three voting districts will receive notices.

This year, the meeting schedule is as follows:

• Aug. 28 – District 2: Marlow First Baptist

Church Chapel, 213 N. Broadway St., Marlow

- Aug. 29 District 6: Simmons Center, 800 Chisholm Trail Parkway, Duncan
- Sept. 7 District 8: Cotton Electric Cooperative Community Center, 226 N. Broadway St., Walters

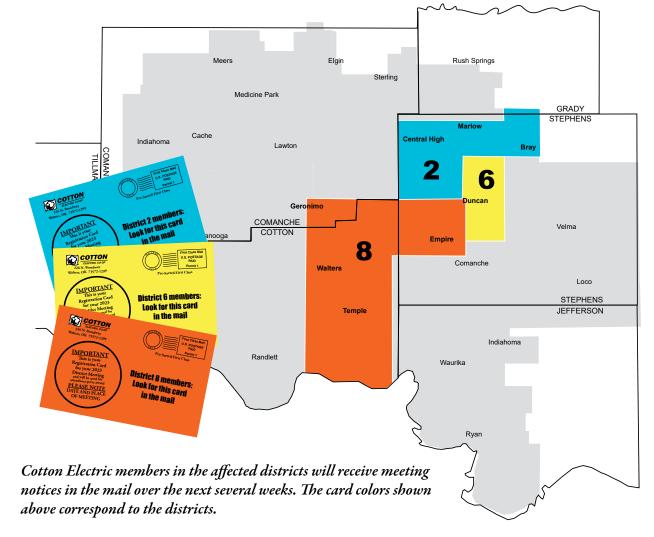
Registration at each meeting will begin at 6 p.m. Members are requested to bring with them the mailed official registration card. The registration card allows for quicker registration and makes the holder eligible for an attendance prize.

Registration ends at 7 p.m. when the business meeting will be called to order. Each member is entitled to one vote in trustee elections.

Churches, clubs, schools, organizations and others will receive credentials to be used to designate a person as the voting delegate. Forms must be presented at registration, with all forms completed and notarized. These will enable the representatives of each organization to vote and participate in the business of the cooperative.

August 14, 2023

NUMBER 12



Trustees who are elected at the district meetings will take office immediately following the annual meeting. Trustees will serve a threeyear term. If there is no election, incumbents are held over for the term. Incumbents are: Ken Layn, District 2; Todd Clark, District 6; and Tony High, District 8.

The cooperative's bylaws further stipulate that an Annual Meeting of the entire membership is to be held shortly after the District Meetings. The 2023 Cotton Cooperative Electric Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation

Trustees



KEN LAYN represents District #2

night will be Tuesday, Sept. 26 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds in Duncan. Registration



TODD CLARK represents District #6

for the in-person Annual Meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. Be sure to watch for your official



represents District #8

Annual Meeting registration card on the cover of the September edition of The Current.



ANNUAL MEETING AND MEMBER APPRECIATION NIGHT

SEPT. 26, 2023 WHEN:

STEPHENS COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after August 1, 2023, is \$0.00661 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$8.59 on the August bill.

July 2023 Temperature Extremes

High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Av
91	70	81	16	92	74	8.
99	67	83	17	102	73	8
99	69	84	18	106	69	8
100	69	85	19	106	69	8
97	72	85	20	102	72	8
93	70	81	21	91	75	8.
95	68	82	22	92	67	80
92	70	81	23	99	63	8
85	68	77	24	107	65	8
92	71	82	25	107	67	8
96	72	84	26	104	67	80
106	77	92	27	105	70	8
108	75	92	28	104	75	9
95	76	86	29	105	71	8
91	75	83	30	106	68	8
srh.noaa.	gov/oun/		31	107	69	8
rage D	aily Hi	gh: 99	Averag	e Daily	Low: 7	0
	91 99 99 100 97 93 95 92 85 92 96 106 108 95 91 srh.noaa,	91 70 99 67 99 69 100 69 97 72 93 70 95 68 92 70 85 68 92 71 96 72 106 77 108 75 95 76 91 75 srh.noaa.gov/oun/	91 70 81 99 67 83 99 69 84 100 69 85 97 72 85 93 70 81 95 68 82 92 70 81 85 68 77 92 71 82 96 72 84 106 77 92 108 75 92 95 76 86 91 75 83	91 70 81 16 99 67 83 17 99 69 84 18 100 69 85 19 97 72 85 20 93 70 81 21 95 68 82 22 92 70 81 23 85 68 77 24 92 71 82 25 96 72 84 26 106 77 92 27 108 75 92 28 95 76 86 29 91 75 83 30 srh.noaa.gov/oun/ 31	91 70 81 16 92 99 67 83 17 102 99 69 84 18 106 100 69 85 19 106 97 72 85 20 102 93 70 81 21 91 95 68 82 22 92 92 70 81 23 99 85 68 77 24 107 92 71 82 25 107 96 72 84 26 104 106 77 92 27 105 108 75 92 28 104 95 76 86 29 105 91 75 83 30 106 srh.noaa.gov/oun/ 31 107	91 70 81 16 92 74 99 67 83 17 102 73 99 69 84 18 106 69 100 69 85 19 106 69 97 72 85 20 102 72 93 70 81 21 91 75 95 68 82 22 92 67 92 70 81 23 99 63 85 68 77 24 107 65 92 71 82 25 107 67 96 72 84 26 104 67 106 77 92 27 105 70 108 75 92 28 104 75 95 76 86 29 105 71 91 75 83 30 106 68 srh.noaa.gov/oun/ 31 107 69

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 4, in observance of Labor Day. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on Sept. 11, 2023.

Contact Us

Do you have a story idea for The Current or do you need to place an ad? If so, let us know.

We can be reached at 580-875-3351 or by email at TheCurrent@ cottonelectric.com.

You can also drop us a line at Cotton Electric Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572.



Mission Statement

Our mission is to safely deliver reliable and affordable power, provide excellent member service, and improve the quality of life in the communities we serve.

From the CEO

Factors that impact electricity prices

was recently asked a question about what impacts electricity prices. While there isn't a short answer, there are a few key elements that impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors Cotton Electric can manage, some of them you can impact and other factors are beyond our control.

There are three primary parts to your monthly electric bill: a facility charge, an energy charge and a Power Cost Adjustment (PCA). To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, we'll unpack one piece at a time.

The first is a fixed monthly facility charge, which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in Cotton Electric's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used. In order to ensure the reliable service you expect

and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a distribution transformer (which looks like a long metal can at the top of a power pole) went from \$710 in 2021 to \$1,615 this year, and wait times to receive this essential equipment can be 30 weeks or more. Because we are a notfor-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members. I should note that the facility charge is the same for everyone in a rate class and the costs are shared equally across the membership.

Another component of your monthly bill is the energy charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling and heating equipment run longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area that you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill ing to continually restructure by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start. To save on your electric bill, keep it close to 78 degrees during summer months. Cotton Electric also offers free energy efficiency home evaluations to help you find ways to save.

The facility and energy charges have remained the same since

The last component of your bill is the PCA, which is published monthly on the front page of The Current. The PCA can be a decrease or an increase, depending on the true cost of wholesale power purchased from our energy supplier, and changes monthly. The PCA covers fuel



Jennifer Meason, CEO

cost fluctuations without havelectricity rates and is passed through without a markup to the membership. Last August, the PCA was \$0.01943 per kWh or \$19.43 for 1,000 kWh. This year, the PCA is lower at \$0.00661 per kWh or \$6.61 for 1,000 kWh.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors that impact electricity prices. While we can't control the weather or the fluctuating costs of fuels, please know Cotton Electric Cooperative is doing everything possible to keep internal costs down. We're here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy at home.

You pay for the electricity you consume each month, but there are additional factors that impact your energy bills.



Fuel Costs

Service Costs

Before electricity can be Your bill includes a monthly delivered to your home, it must service charge, which recovers first be generated at a power part of the co-op's ongoing plant or from a renewable investments in poles, wire, source. The cost of fuels used meters, system maintenance to generate electricity and additional costs necessary fluctuates, which is why you to provide electric service. see a power or fuel charge on your monthly bill. This monthly charge covers cost fluctuations



Weather

When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling or heating equipment must run longer and at maximum capacity, which can greatly increase your energy use. Extreme temperatures can also affect electricity market prices. When the need for electricity increases due to extreme heat or cold, the price of power typically rises.



Energy Consumption

This is the amount of electricity you use each month to power your home's cooling/heating system, appliances, lighting, electronics and more.

The amount of electricity you consume is measured in kilowatt-hours, or kWh. You have control over how much energy you use, which can ultimately help manage your monthly costs.



without having to continually

restructure electricity rates.

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Did you know ceiling fans can make a room feel 4 degrees cooler? To save energy through ceiling fan use, remember to raise your thermostat a few degrees while fans are turned on. Ceiling fans can help improve comfort year-round. In the summer, operate ceiling fans in a counterclockwise direction. Reverse the direction to clockwise during winter months and set fans on a low speed so warm air can circulate from the ceiling to the lower levels of the

Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Be sure to turn them off when you leave the room.

Source: Energy.gov

June 2023 Operating Stats

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$6,659,712	\$8,000,644
Cost of Purchased Power	4,718,849	5,818,267
Taxes	117,658	137,935
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,238	1,423
Average Farm and Residential Bill	156	200
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,304	1,517
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	19,485	19,252
Miles Energized	5,260	5,232
Density Per Mile	3.70	3.68
New Service Connects YTD	219	242
Services Retired	98	62

Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

September

Ad Sales Aug. 25 Classified Aug. 25 Publish Sept. 11

October

Ad Sales Sept. 29 Classified Sept. 29 Publish Oct. 16

The Current

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Jennifer MeasonCEO Shane Bowers......Vice President Zach YoungDirector Carli Eubank......Communications Specialist

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Energy Efficiency

Revolutionary Innovations in Water Heating Technology

have revolutionized various aspects of our lives, and water heating is no exception. Traditional water heaters have been replaced by cutting-edge solutions that offer enhanced energy efficiency and intelligent features. In this article, we continue our dive into emerging home energy technologies, and take a closer look at two innovations in water heating: heat-pump water heaters and smart water heaters.

Heat-Pump Water Heaters:

Heat-pump water heaters (HPWHs) are a remarkable example of energy-ef-

or gas, HPWHs extract heat from the ambient air or surrounding environment and transfer it to the water. This process consumes significantly less energy, resulting in substantial cost savings for users.

By leveraging the principles of refrigeration technology in reverse, HP-WHs can generate up to three times more energy than they consume. Heatpump water heaters are also versatile and can be installed in various climates, making them an ideal solution for residential and commercial applications. HPWHs are capable of producing ficient technology. Unlike convention- hot water with minimal energy waste,

dvancements in technology al models that rely solely on electricity making them an eco-friendly alternative to traditional water heaters.

Smart Water Heaters:

The rise of the Internet of Things (IoT) has paved the way for smart water heaters which offer unparalleled convenience and energy management. Smart water heaters integrate connectivity and intelligent features into the water heating system, enhancing convenience, comfort, and energy efficiency. These devices can be controlled remotely through smartphone applications or integrated with home automation systems, enabling users to adjust temperature settings and monitor usage patterns from anywhere.

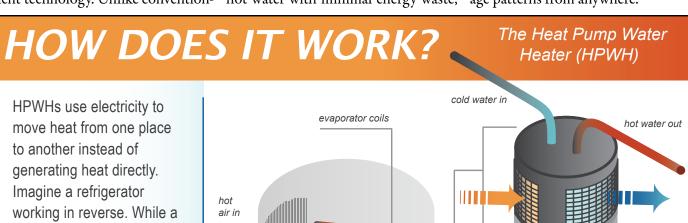


Heath Morgan, **Energy Efficiency** Coordinator

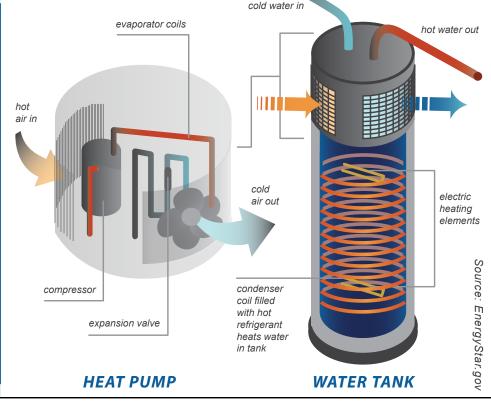
One of the key advantages of smart water heaters is their ability to learn and adapt to user behavior. They can analyze usage patterns and automatically adjust heating schedules to optimize energy consumption. For instance, if a household typically uses hot water in the morning, the smart water heater can anticipate this demand and preheat the water accordingly, saving both time and energy.

Moreover, smart water heaters often include features such as leak detection and water quality monitoring. By providing real-time alerts, they help homeowners prevent water damage and maintain the overall health of their plumbing systems.

Heat-pump water heaters and smart water heaters represent significant advancements in the field of water heating technology. With their energy-efficient operation and intelligent features, these innovations offer users substantial cost savings, reduced environmental impact, and enhanced convenience. As the demand for sustainable and connected solutions continues to rise, we can expect further advancements and improvements in water heating technology, ensuring a more efficient and comfortable future for homeowners.



refrigerator removes heat from an enclosed box and expels that heat to the surrounding air, a HPWH takes the heat from surrounding air and transfers it to water in an enclosed tank. During periods of high hot water demand, HPWHs switch to standard electric resistance heat automatically.



Heat-pump water heaters are great pieces of energy-efficienct technology to add to your household. Graphic courtesy of cooperative.com.

Heating Degree Day and Cooling Degree Day Calendar

CDD **HDD** YEAR

> 2023 593

0(2022 720

2021 483

Degree days measure how cold or warm a location is by comparing the average of the high and low (mean) of the outdoor temperatures recorded in that location to the standard U.S. temperature, which is 65 F. The assumption is that we don't need heating or cooling to be comfortable when this is the outdoor temperature.







Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation

CECF announces third quarter grant recipients

Pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters – set enough of them aside on a regular basis, and the coins add up to dollars. That's how Operation Round Up (ORU) works.

Most Cotton Electric members participate in ORU, in which power bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar. The amount rounded up can be as little as 1 cent and is never more than 99 cents. On average, each participating member contributes about \$6 each year.

The funds are pooled and administered by the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF), a board of directors who meets quarterly to consider grant applications from individuals and organizations in the area. The board consists of Jennifer Meason, the co-op's CEO; Shan Files, president of the co-op's board of trustees; and three representatives

from the Cotton Electric service area: Cindy Zelbst, Danny Marlett, Carter Waid.

The board met in February to review several grant applications. Grants totaling \$16,262.32 will be distributed to five of the applicants. Third-quarter grant recipients include: Big Pasture School District, Fairview Cemetery of Randlett, Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, Rush Springs United Methodist Church and Velma-Alma Public Schools.

Fourth-quarter applications are due Nov. 14, 2023. The board of directors for CECF will meet again on Nov. 28 to review applications for the quarter.

CECF grant guidelines and applications can be downloaded and completed at www.cottonelectric. com/grant-applications. Application can also be submitted by email to zyoung@cottonelectric.com or by mail to 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572.

Grants Awarded

Big Pasture School District \$7,000 for facility upgrades

Fairview Cemetery of Randlett \$1,000 for improvements

Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma

\$2,500 for the Food for Kids programs in the co-op's service territory

Rush Springs United Methodist Church

\$990.32 for food bank Velma-Alma Public Schools

\$4,772 for interactive TV's

CECF annual golf tournament set for October



Golf enthusiasts have a great opportunity to spend a day on an 18-hole championship course while helping to raise funds supporting organizations and individuals throughout southwest Oklahoma.

The 15th annual Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) NotSo-Summer Classic will be Oct. 30 at individuals throughout the Cotton The Territory Golf and Country Club in Duncan. Check-in for the four-person scramble will begin at 7:30 a.m. with a shotgun start at 9 a.m.

The golf tournament is held to raise awareness of CECF and generate funds for Operation Round Up (ORU). ORU is primarily funded by Cotton Electric Cooperative members who "round up" their monthly bill to the nearest dollar. The funds are administered by CECF, which meets quarterly to consider grant applica-

Since its inception in 2004, CECF has awarded more than \$1.5 million to volunteer fire departments, youth, senior citizen and public safety organizations, schools, communities and

Electric service area.

Golf tournament entries and fee payments can be emailed to cecfgolf@ cottonelectric.com by Oct. 20. The registration fee of \$800 per team will include range balls, cart, green fees, and a meal following the round. Team, hole contest and door prizes will be awarded.

Two levels of hole sponsorship are available. Hole sponsors who also enter a team receive a \$50 discount on entry fees.

For information about the scramble or becoming a sponsor, visit www. cottonelectric.com/CECFGolf, call Zach Young at 580-875-3351 or email zyoung@cottonelectric.com.









HOME • COMMERCIAL • LIFE • AUTO • BOAT • MOTORCYCLE • CAMPER

What to consider before saying yes to solar

Cotton Electric launches new solar calculator tool

U.S. homeowners, surveyed by the Pew Research Center in January 2022, demonstrated a strong interest in installing residential solar panels for their homes, with 8% stating they had already done so and 39% stating they had given it serious thought. Anyone seriously considering a residential solar panel system should do their homework first, as it is a big investment.

New solar calculator resource

A new research tool that is available to those considering solar is Cotton Electric Cooperative's solar calculator. On our website, members will be asked a few questions about the specifics of the potential solar installation before receiving an unbiased overview tailored to you and your household.

"We are very excited to introduce this resource," said Heath Morgan, Cotton Electric energy efficiency coordinator. "This will be another beneficial interacting tool for helping members who are considering solar."

The cooperative's service charges, rates and other inputs, along with variables from a member's solar proposal, will be used to generate an accurate estimate for your household now and years later. Whether you've already acquired a few quotes or are just curious about solar, members can gain confidence as they plug information into the software to receive a report that will reflect what they're

planning on doing or wanting to do. Financing options, such as cash, loan or lease, will be included on the estimate, as well. Members also have the option to print their detailed report and request a follow-up discussion with a Cotton Electric employee.

"We want to make sure our members are educated and understand the information they receive and this tool will allow members to dig deeper into their research about solar," Morgan said.

The solar calculator tool is available on the co-op's website at www.CottonElectric. com/renewable-energy.

Benefits of home solar

According to energy.gov, the potential benefits of having a residential solar panel system include:

- Cost savings on energy stills
- Increased home value
- Reduction of carbon dioxide, water consumption, greenhouse gases and other pollutants

The benefits of solar can vary drastically based on:

- Electricity consumption
- Solar energy system type and size
- Whether a system is purchased or leased
- Direct hours of daily sunlight
- Size and angle of the roof
- Local electricity rates

Drawbacks of solar

plug information into the The major drawback of software to receive a report home solar panel systems is that will reflect what they're the upfront costs. According

to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), the average cost of installing a residential rooftop solar array is \$19,000. Additionally, every time your roof needs to be replaced, the solar array must be removed, reinstalled and often repaired, adding to the costs of both your solar panel system and roofing projects.

However, since the lifetime of a solar panel array and a roof are both roughly 25 to 30 years, energy.gov recommends that individuals consider replacing their roofs at the same time that they install the solar panel array to avoid staggered reinstallation and repair costs. For example, the NREL estimates that when installing a roof and a solar array together, it costs approximately \$25,000 as opposed to \$30,000 when installed separately (the price varies depending on the size of the home and other factors).

Do your research

In addition to contacting your cooperative, do the following:

- Review energy bills for the past 12 to 24 months to calculate the average monthly kilowatt usage
- Assess the age, size and condition of your roof, as well as available ground space. This will help determine the best location for solar panel arrays
- Hire qualified installers who are trained and certified to install solar, among other factors
- Get several quotes from multiple installers and ensure



Scan the QR card on your mobile device to learn more about Cotton Electric's new solar calculator tool.

that all costs are factored into the quotes, including equipment, permitting, installation and inspection fees

• Do your homework on the solar company before signing a contract. Request documentation of the contractor's licensing, permitting and other credentials, as well as combing through their reviews and checking their status on sites like the Better Business Bureau

Are there tax breaks/incentives?

There is a federal tax break available to those who qualify. The federal residential solar energy credit is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the amount of income tax otherwise owed. For example, claiming a \$1,000 federal tax credit reduces federal income taxes by \$1,000.

The residential tax credit can be claimed on federal income taxes for a percentage of the cost of a home solar panel system paid for by the taxpayer (e.g., a 30% tax credit). Do your research on the financing company and be aware that the amount of credit will apply to your specific financing

situation with solar. The best way to find incentives is to visit the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency website at www. DSIREUSA.org.

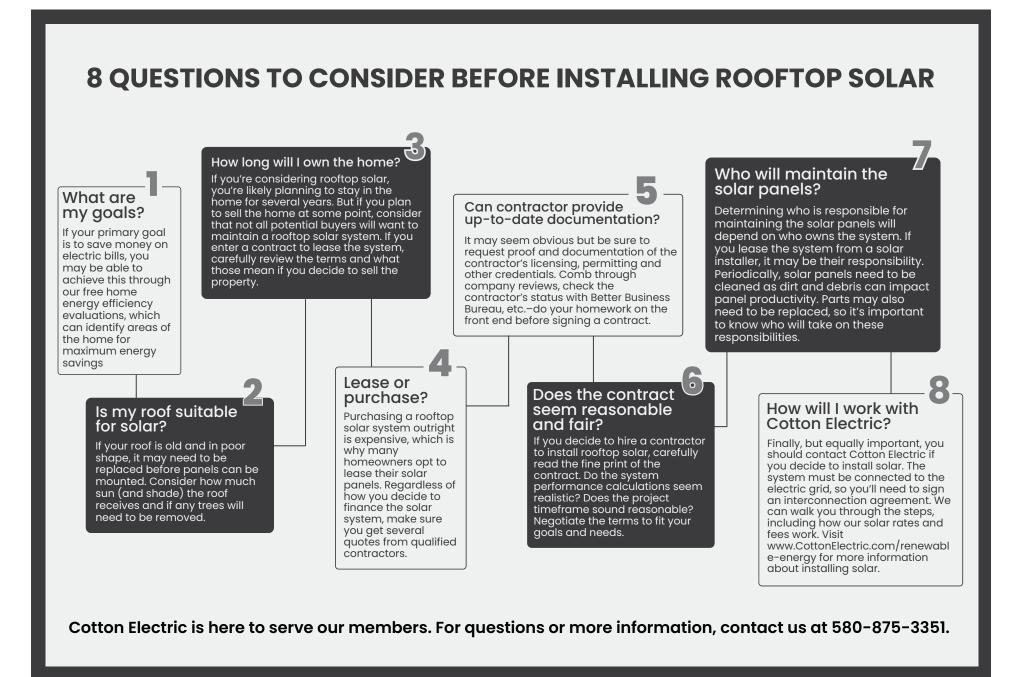
Involve your utility early

If you are considering a solar system, let your utility know, since most residential systems are tied to the power grid. The utility will be able to provide information about connection requirements and fees, relevant policies, accurate rates and other resources.

For many homeowners, solar panels are a way to help the environment and save on electric bills—but there are many factors to consider before diving in and installing a system.

As with any major home project, do plenty of research upfront, and contact your cooperative if you have questions or decide to move forward with installation. We're your local energy partner and can serve as a helpful resource throughout the process.

For questions or more information, call us at 580-875-3351.







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Discover a payment method fit for you

Providing multiple payments options is one of the ways Cotton Electric is here for our members. By choosing the payment option that works best for you, we can better serve you, our members. When making a payment, be sure to have your Cotton Electric account number handy, which can be found at the top left of your bill, just under your address. If you have multiple accounts, all numbers are required. See below to find which payment option works best for you:

By mail

Use the return envelope that comes with your monthly power bill. We do not accept cash by mail so make sure to enclose a check and the bottom portion of the bill.

In person

We accept cash, checks, money orders and credit cards at our headquarters, 226 N. Broadway in Walters, and at our Duncan office, 1101 W. Oak. Business hours at both offices are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, except holidays. Credit card payments can be made only by using devices in the lobbies at either office or the outside kiosk at the Duncan office. Credit cards will not be accepted for payment on commercial accounts.

By phone

Call 1-855-730-8711 to make a payment using a series of menu choices in an automated system. The system requires a Cotton Electric account number and credit/debit card or banking account numbers.

SmartHub electronic check / credit card

Members can sign up for online or mobile device account access and pay via electronic check or with Visa, MasterCard or Discover credit cards any time of day with no additional charge. Credit cards will not be accepted for payment on commercial accounts. First-time set-up requires your Cotton Electric account number. Members can visit www.CottonElectric.com and click on the View and Pay My Bill button, which is linked to our SmartHub payment log-in page. Members using smart phones or tablets can download the free SmartHub app at SmartHubApp.com. The app is available in versions compatible with Apple and Android devices.

Monthly bank draft

This method requires an Authorization Agreement for Automatic Debit form and a voided, unsigned check.

The forms are available at either office or can be downloaded at the View and Pay My Bill page of our website at www.cottonelectric.com/viewpaymy-bill. We can also mail the form to you. Once it is filled out and returned, it takes a few days to arrange for your checking account to be drafted 10 days after your billing date each month.

Moneygram

Moneygram transactions are handled at Walmart and CVS stores anywhere in the United States. There is a fee for this transaction that requires cash or a debit card. When using this payment option, use billing code 7933.

Average Monthly Payment

Qualifying members for our Average Monthly Payment (AMP) plan must have a 12-month billing history and the account should be in current status. This means that the current billing should not be past due, no unpaid balance should exist on the account and that previous credit history has been good. The average of the previous 12 months is reflected in a monthly bill and the amount each month may vary due to fluctuations in fuel costs, variations in usage and Power Cost Adjustment. With

AMP, instead of high and low bills as the seasons change, bill amounts will tend to flatten and be close to the same amount each month. Any of the payment methods listed above can be used when paying on accounts using the Average Monthly Payment plan. Please contact our Member Service department at 580-875-3351 to make sure that you qualify for this plan.

MyChoice

Cotton Electric Cooperative offers a payment method designed with busy members in mind. MyChoice is a prepay energy solution that gives our members the power of choice. You pay for electricity how and when you choose, the same way you buy groceries or gasoline. Purchasing electricity before you use it allows you to pay how much you want, when you want. There are no security deposits or late fees. You will not receive a monthly statement. Your energy use and balance are calculated daily and you can track them by mobile device using the free SmartHub app or online at www. CottonElectric.com under the View and Pay My Bill tab.

For questions or more information, visit our offices or call 580-875-3351.

Simple changes make a big difference and add up to savings. Learn more at CottonElectric.com and TouchstoneEnergy.com.



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940.631.2333

COMANCHE Wednesday 9am Peyton D. Hale 580.439.8865

817.888.0657

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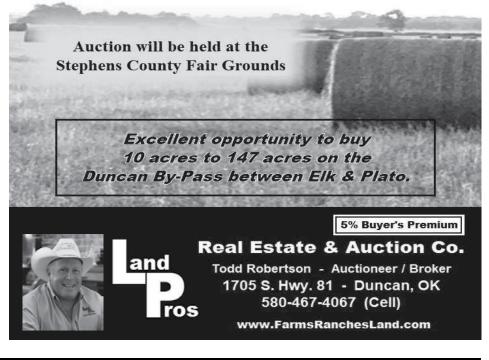
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Thursday, Sept. 7, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.



529 plans offer benefits in all markets

A new school year will soon begin. And if you have young children, that means it's one year closer to the day when they head off to college or some other post-secondary education or training. You might be preparing for that day with a 529 education savings plan — but should you be concerned



if you need to start taking withdrawals to pay for education expenses when the financial markets are

volatile? Long-term investment vehicles based on the financial markets, like a 529 plan, will always fluctuate in value. If you've had a 529 plan for many years, you've probably invested money when the market has been up, down and flat. In fact, during down periods, it's often a good time to invest, because your dollars buy more shares than they could when prices are up. Your hope is that, over the years, your 529 plan will

gain enough to overcome the short-term declines in value. temporary drops in value. Specifically, withdraw money an

In any case, you'll want to keep in mind the key benefit of 529 plans: Earnings and withdrawals are federally tax free when the money is used for qualified education expenses for college and some trade school programs. And your state may give you an income tax deduction or a credit for your 529 plan contributions. In some states, a 529 plan can be used for K-12 schooling as well.

You have another incentive to keep your 529 plan intact despite

value. Specifically, if you withdraw money and don't use it for eligible education expenses, your withdrawal may be subject to a 10% penalty, in addition to state and federal income taxes. That could be a high price to pay for a move that may not be in your best interest. After all, if you were to move your 529 plan money into a minimalrisk asset, such as some type of cash vehicle, you could sacrifice some of the growth potential you might need to meet the high costs of higher education.

Many 529 plans offer investment portfolios that gradually become more risk averse as the beneficiary gets closer to college age. A financial advisor can discuss the investment options with you.

While this investment feature doesn't guarantee you'll have complete immunity from financial market volatility, it can help reduce its impact when you need access to the money.

Here's one more point to keep in mind: Just because you've planned to access your 529 plan when your child reaches 18, or whatever age they begin their postsecondary education, you're not required to take money out at that point. You can keep your 529 plan intact until you feel more comfortable making withdrawals, though you'll need to consider how this decision will affect your ability to help pay for your child's education.

The financial markets will always be in some type of flux, but don't let these movements deter you from sticking with a 529 plan — it's still one of the best investments you can make in your child's future.

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

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Edward Jones MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

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Creating readers to be the main character

By Carli Eubank

Reading can be very impressionable on a child growing up, allowing their imagination to immerse themselves in a story. Maybe someone remembers when they sat down with Sam-I-Am for a dinner of green eggs and ham. For another, they watched a hungry caterpillar eat more and more fruit until he became a butterfly. Or someone else called out with Froggy's mom to Froggy to remind him that he forgot to put on his winter clothes before hopping out into the snow.

For many people, there was a certain book read to them over and over when they were young, and it became their favorite book because of how they cheered for the main character, laughed at the silly animals or learned a positive message about overcoming obstacles. For Cotton Electric member Debbie Thomason of Debbie's Little Books, she helps make stories with a special touch of reality by making a loved one the main character of the story.

Thomason, a dealer for Create-A-Book and a Co-op Connections business partner, has made personalized books for about 20 years. Cotton Electric members can get 10% off the regular purchase price of personalized books with their Co-op Connections card.

"I've always loved reading and have always been a big proponent of reading to kids," Thomason said. "Whenever I became a Create-A-Book dealer for southwest Oklahoma and received my first order of books, I just fell in love with them."

There are a variety of books that Thomason can create, depending on the occasion

the customer is wanting to document, such as birthdays, religions, holidays, sporting events, education and more. Books share personalized details, such as names, hometowns, and family members, just to name a few. Thomason has book covers and pages in stock, so whenever she receives an order, she enters the details into her computer system before printing and binding the finished personalized book.

Thomason's most popular book is the baby book that records details of the day a loved one was born. Details about that day include the baby's name and arrival time, names of the parents and relatives, the name of the doctor who delivered the baby and the hospital where the baby was born.

"My favorite of what I do is seeing people's eyes light up when they recognize their name in the book," Thomason said. "Creating these books is something that I will always do because it's my favorite gift to give someone."

Members can visit with Thomason to order a personalized book during the Arts and Crafts Festival in November at the Lawton Coliseum. Members can also view the book collection and place orders on Thomason's website at www.debbieslittlebooks.com.

Don't have your Co-op Connections card? No problem! They are available to all members and can be downloaded in the app, printed online, or picked up at Cotton Electric offices in Walters or Duncan. You can also visit www. connections.coop.com or www.cottonelectric. com under the Member Services tab to discover how you can be part of this free, money-saving opportunity.



Debbie Thomason has around 100 different books that can be personalized. Photo by Carli Eubank.



One of Thomason's most ordered books is the baby books that records the details of when a loved one was born. Photo by Carli Eubank.







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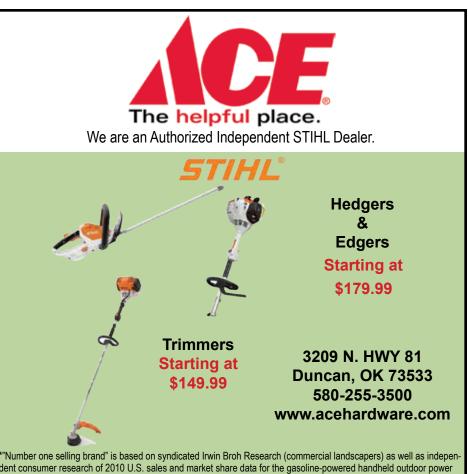
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Tips for an energy-efficient school year

Electronics are important to today's students for education, entertainment, and daily living. Energy efficient electronics can help students reduce energy use and save money.

The Energy Education Council recommends considering some of the following electronics to kick your school year off with an efficient start:

• Smart Power Strips:

These power strips are controlled by a primary electronic device, such as a computer, and all peripheral electronics are controlled by the primary. For example, if you plugged a computer in and then plugged a printer in, the smart strip would shut off power to both the computer and printer when the computer was off.

• Energy Star Products:

Many students purchase computers and TVs for their dorms. Look for the blue Energy Star label on electronics. These products can use 30 percent less energy than comparable non-Energy Star products.

• Battery Charger:

A rechargeable battery set is an efficient way to avoid the hassle of running out of batteries and helps keep batteries out of landfills. When disposing of batteries, look for a local battery recycling program.

Solar Charger:

Solar chargers are a convenient option for students on the go. Leave these chargers in a sunny window, and after a few hours they are ready to charge cellphones, tablets and more.

• LED/CFLs:

Incandescent light bulbs can use 75 percent more energy than a CFL or LED, and you pay for every extra bit of energy incandescent bulbs use. Not only are CFLs and LEDs more efficient, they can last at least six years.

• Compact Refrigerator:

If you are taking a refrigerator to school, look for an Energy Star qualified model and consider a compact refrigerator. If you have a roommate, plan on sharing the fridge for increased efficiency.

Drying Rack:

A collapsible drying rack can save students' quarters and hassle. Instead of waiting in the laundry room while their clothes dry, students can dry clothes on a rack in the convenience of their own room or apartment.

For more efficiency tips for home owners and apartment renters, visit EnergyEdCouncil.org or CottonElectric.com/energy-efficiency.

Source: SafeElectricity.com





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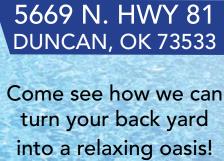
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Stop those phone call scams

The Story

David was busy watching his favorite streaming series when he got a phone call from a number he did not recognize. The area code was the same as his, so he assumed it was someone local and answered the phone. Right away David was asked to confirm his full name. The caller then stated that he was from the police department and that a warrant had been issued for David's arrest. David's taxes were outstanding and if they were not paid in the next 24 hours, the police would have to arrest him. David was terrified and asked what he needed to do.

The caller then gave him the phone number of the local government tax department where he could take care of the outstanding taxes. David immediately hung up and then called that number, which was answered by a kind lady who identified herself with the local tax department. David gave her his full information. After a mo-

ment, she confirmed that he had \$1,487.72 outstanding in taxes. If he paid immediately over the phone with his credit card, she would be able to take care of the situation and he would not go to jail. David was relieved and immediately gave her the credit card information, which she charged for the full amount, telling him everything was resolved.

The Attack

The problem was that the callers were neither from the police department nor a government tax agency. These were two criminals working together to scam people. They were calling thousands of random people and repeating the same story. They used special software to ensure that the number they called from always used the same area code as the victims they were calling, making it look like their phone number was local and more trusted.

These criminals use other stories as well — everything from claiming that your warranty has expired, to provid-

ing business loans you can take out for free, to fixing your infected computer. Quite often they are trying to get your credit card information or passwords, fool you into transferring them money, or perhaps even give them remote access to your computer.

These scammers often create a tremendous sense of urgency or promise you something too good to be true in order to trick you. They use emotion to rush you into making a mistake. They may have also collected prior information about you which they'll use to establish credibility.

More recently, with the availability of artificial intelligence services, scammers can even change their voices in phone calls.

The Counterattack: What You Can Do

There are several steps you can take immediately to protect yourselves:

• Configure your phone to only allow calls from trusted numbers in your phone's Internal Contraction of the Cont

Be cautious when you receive a call from an unknown number and when in doubt, hang up. Photo courtesty of Canva.

Contacts or Address Book. This makes it so that any call from someone you do not know will instead go directly to voicemail. The vast majority of scammers will not even bother leaving a voice message, and for the ones who do, it is easier to determine if it's a scam and delete. In addition, some service providers also have call screening service which you can enable.

• If you do end up on the phone with someone you do not know, be cautious. If they are pressuring you into taking an action, it's most likely a scam. If they say it's your bank calling, hang up and use a trusted phone number to call your bank back, such as the number on your bank card. If

they say it's the government calling, go to that government department's website and find a trusted phone number to call back. The longer they have you on the phone, the more likely they can trick you.

• Never provide the caller with personal or sensitive information that they should already have. If your bank calls you, they should already know your name, address, and account number.

Modern scammers are extremely aggressive. They have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Configure your phone to only receive phone calls from contacts you know and trust, and when in doubt, hang up.









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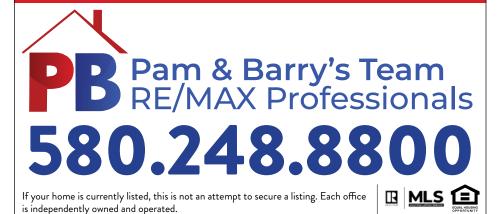




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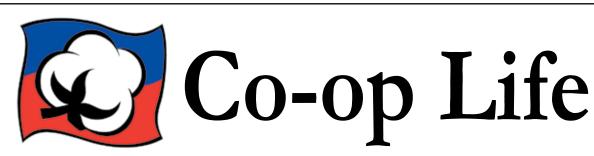
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Summer treat grown where roots run deep

By Carli Eubank

For many families, watermelon is a much-anticipated seasonal treat during those long, summer days. For some families in Rush Springs, growing watermelons is a livelihood they think about all

Cotton Electric member Joel Tumblson is one of many who remembers his family driving to Rush Springs to pick out a Black Diamond watermelon every summer during his childhood. When he returned home from being drafted in the 60s, he began working at a grocery store in Oklahoma City in the produce department, buying produce around the area and Arkansas for about 30 years. During that time, he thought back to his roots and began making deals with Black Diamond watermelon growers in Rush Springs. Tumblson eventually bought land in Rush Springs and shifted his focus onto starting a watermelon farm with his family in

Tumblson's son, Joel Jr., who also goes by Joe, grew up in the watermelon field and became the next generation of the family's operation. There are many moving parts to running a produce operation, but one of Joe's favorite parts is the fieldwork. He explained how knowing when to cut a ripe crop is one of the most important keys to producing good watermelons.

helping cut the watermelons because when someone comes by and says how one of

they've ever had, it makes you feel good," Joe said.

Visiting with new and regular customers is another opportunity the Tumblson family enjoy about their business. People browsing through the homegrown tomatoes, cantaloupe, varieties of watermelon and more can receive helpful expertise from the family when picking good produce.

"I think we've been successful and worked hard toward building a good reputation on quality and the best service we can give," Joel said. "Some people ask why choose a Black Diamond over some of the sweeter hybrid fruits, and it just takes you back to what you had when you were a kid. We often have people who will take a Sunday drive from all over to our stand because they remember doing that growing up."

The majority of the produce is grown by the Tumblson family, but the products that aren't, like the honey products, are locally sourced and bought. Their products may be found in grocery stores around Oklahoma City, as

Members can stop by the three-generation family-operated produce stand seven days a week, located a half mile north of Highway 7 on Highway 81 in Rush Springs.

Bratcher Melons is also operated by family with a deep history of producing water-"I like being out in the field melons in Rush Springs. Cotton Electric member Garrin Bratcher began driving a tractor for his great uncle when

our watermelons was the best he was just 10 years old doing what he described most kids from Rush Springs did: working in the watermelon fields. As Bratcher grew up and went to college, he found himself drifting back to the watermelon fields at home.

> "It's hard to explain, but it just gets in your blood," Bratcher said. "Growing watermelons is the DNA of this town and the livelihood of a lot of families, so we take a lot of pride in that and try to represent the community the best we can."

Bratcher learned many lessons and made many memories working in the watermelon fields, and he wanted the next generation to experience what he did growing up. His son, Casen, and daughter, Kinley, are the main operators of Bratcher Melons, but he is always ready to help when needed.

While the Bratcher family may not pick watermelons every night, there is constantly something to be done daily in the fields. There are many varieties of watermelons grown at the family's local patch, but the main variety for Bratcher Melons is a "consistent and sweet" Delta.

Even though growing produce deals with many obstacles, like weather elements, Bratcher says it's all worth it whenever he sees a family looking for a good watermelon to bring home.

"You can't beat the smile of a kid when their mom or dad picks them up a watermelon," Bratcher said. "Seeing that experience often reminds me

of the memories I have with my family in the watermelon field, and that's the best part of doing what we do."

Bratcher Melons sell their produce at different locations, including Marlow, Chickasha, Norman and more. Members can follow their Facebook page, Bratcher Melons, to stay up to date on where they will be selling next.

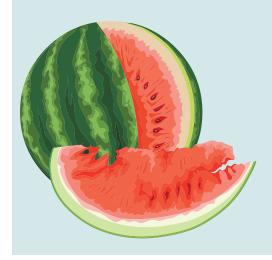
Members can also taste and experience the local watermelon crop grown by the Tumblson family, Bratcher family, and others at the annual Rush Springs Watermelon Festival. The well-known event is held on the second Saturday in August, with this year's festival taking place on Aug. 12. There will be arts and crafts, carnival rides, contests, exhibits and samples of local watermelon varieties to experience at one of Oklahoma's most popular festivals.

Rush Springs Watermelon Festival

WHEN: Saturday, August 12 7:30 a.m. - 11 p.m.

WHERE: Jeff Davis Park Rush Springs, OK

Facebook: Rush Springs Watermelon Festival





Cotton Electric member Joel Tumblson and his family operate their produce stand seven days a week, located a half mile north of Highway 7 on Highway 81 in Rush Springs. Photo by Carli Eubank.



Bratcher Melons grows a variety of watermelons, including Black Diamond, but their main crop are Deltas. Photo courtesy of Garrin Bratcher.



Casen and Kinley Bratcher, along with other family and friends, load watermelons in the trailer at their watermelon patch in Rush Springs. Photo courtesy of Cotton Electric member Garrin Bratcher.



The Tumblson family raises seven different watermelon varieties, tomatoes, cantaloupes, peppers, onions, and more. Photo by Carli Eubank.



If you would like your community event listed in the September issue, please submit information by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com August 25. Only events occuring after September 11 will be published in the next issue.

Editor's Note: We recommend checking for cancellations with local sources before attending any event.

Walk to Remember in Duncan

Join the Duncan Regional Hospital Health Foundation for an inspirational walk to remember a loved one. There is a \$20 registration fee, t-shirt included. The event begins at 7:30 p.m. on Aug. 22 at Duncan Regional Hospital Learning Center. For questions, visit www.drhhealthfoundation.org.

Duncan's Annual Coin Show

Come to Duncan's Annual Coin Show to buy, sell or trade gold, silver, coins, currency, tokens and more. Free appraisals will be available. Free admission to the public. The event is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sept. 8 and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sept. 9 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds, 1618 S. 13 St. in Duncan. For more information, contact Ed at 580-475-4570.

CU hosts annual academic festival

The theme for Cameron University's 12th academic festival is "Care and Health: A Generational Approach." The festival begins with a presentation from Michele Borba, Ed. D. where she will address child and adolescent mental health. Borba is a parenting child expert recognized for her solution-based strategies to strengthen children's character, resilience, and reduce peer cruelty. She is globally recognized for her work in bullying and youth violence prevention and has earned many honors and awards over the years. This presentation is the first make other arrangements.

of three for the annual festival with more presentation following in November and February of the following year. Borba's presentation is Sept. 14 at Cameron University. For more information, call 580-581-2211, email publicaffairs@cameron.edu, or visit their website at www.cameron.edu/ public-affairs/academic-festivals/.

United Way 6th Annual BBQ Showdown

Enjoy delicious barbecue for a good cause as the United Way 6th Annual BBQ Showdown comes to Duncan's Fuqua Park from noon to 2 p.m. on Sept. 16. Judging will begin at 10 a.m. and awards will be announced at noon. This event supports United Way of Stephens County's partnering agencies. Admission price is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 10 and under and covers samples of meats, side dishes and desserts. For questions or more information, call 580-255-3648 or visit www.unitedwayofsc.org.

Food pantry open once monthly

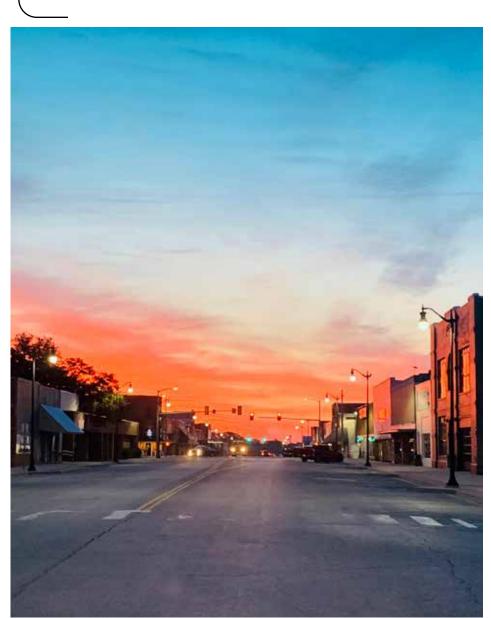
Walters Community Food Pantry is open from 8 to 11 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month. The pantry is in the old City Hall, 131 1/2 W. California St. Pantry organizers try to provide a two-week supply of basic staples to anyone with identification and proof of Cotton County residency. Monetary donations may be sent to Food Pantry, c/o Paul Metcalfe, 211 E. Colorado St., Walters, OK 73572. For information, call Roger Noland at 580-591-6826.

Blessings Boutique open monthly

Marlow First United Methodist Church opens its Blessings Boutique from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every first and third Tuesday of the month. Clothing donation drop-off days are Tuesdays or call the church at 580-658-2765 to

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MONTH



Cotton Electric member Sherina Barber snapped this photo of Main Street in Marlow before starting her bus route for Marlow Public Schools.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. The theme for September is Back to School! Entries can be emailed to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com or mailed to The Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572. Winners will receive a Cotton Electric prize.



Controlled amounts of this artificial sweetener deemed safe



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food **Y**

Popular journalism is at it again with sensational headlines about artificial sweeteners – specifically aspartame (typically in a blue packet and widely used in diet sodas). report released by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). The IARC report placed aspartame in group 2B - "possibly carcinogenic to humans," along with aloe vera, being a carpenter or firefighter, and pickled vegetables. Reading the report summary reveals the following: The experts only found three studies that met their criteria. In those studies, there was an association and not causation with aspartame and cancer, and the committee still deems aspartame as safe at 40 milligrams per 2.2 pounds of body weight per day. Per www. cancer.org/, a person weighing 154 pounds would need to consume 9-14 cans of diet soda per day to go over the Acceptable Daily Intake of aspartame (40 mg per 2.2 pounds of body weight per day).

replacement for sucrose because it is partame per day. Water remains the 180 to 200 times sweeter than sugbest way to hydrate, but if you enjoy ar without adding calories. Since its foods or drinks that contain asparapproval by the United States Food tame, there is no reason currently to and Drug Administration (FDA) stop consuming them. in 1981, a plethora of studies have been published looking at the safe- listen to science-based and not ty of aspartame as well as its impact sensational information on this on health. While it was intended topic, here are some great places to help with diabetes and obesity, to start: the Genetic Literacy Projresearch continues to question the ect at www.geneticliteracyproject. positive impact on these chronic org/, specifically their podcast on diseases. Despite this, it is still considered safe to consume and is wide- Alcohol is good...and bad for you? ly used to lower the sugar and/or An expert checklist for spotting calorie content in many foods.

you lack the enzyme to break down avoid it completely.

If you would like to review or "Aspartame doesn't cause cancer; health scares" released on June 28, Some people do have adverse re- 2023; the American Cancer Society



Aspartame was discovered in the Artificial sweeteners, like aspartame, are widely used in diet sodas. 1960s and found application as a *Photo courtesy of Metro Creative*.



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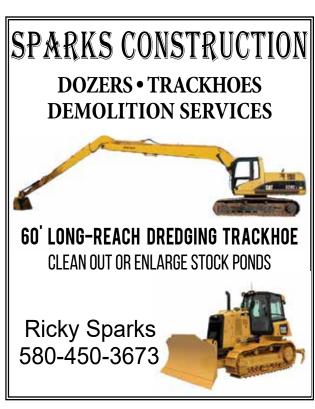
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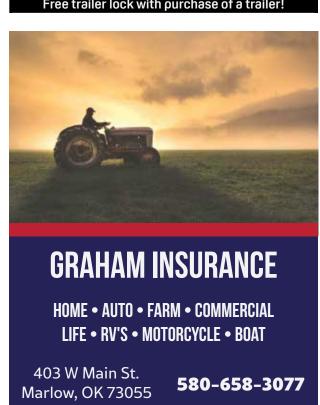
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Jefferson County Rural Water #1 in Hastings is currently taking applications for a field technician. Applicants must have a CDL or be able to obtain a CDL within 3 months. Applicants must also be able to obtain DEQ licensing within 3 months. Applicants must pass

pre-employment drug screening and background check. Duties include meter reading, operating equipment, physical labor. Minimum of 40 hours with overtime. Must be able to be on call nights and weekends. Must be organized and punctual. Applications will be taken until the position is filled. Applications are available online at jeffersonrwd1.org. No phone calls please. Questions will not be answered via phone, messenger, or text message. Paid time off, retirement, and health insurance provided. Jefferson County Rural Water #1 is an equal opportunity employer.

Fuel for Full Days of Learning

(Family Features) Between morning routines, days spent in the classroom, extracurriculars and homework, it may seem like there's never enough time in the day during the school year. However, making time for tasty meals and snacks doesn't have to be another burden on jam-packed schedules.

These quick recipes for a flavorful twist on a breakfast favorite, easy-to-make sliders featuring kid-friendly flavors and delightful treats to enjoy at the end of the day can help keep little learners (and older family members, too) fueled up and ready to tackle all the school year throws their way.

Find more recipes to get you through busy back-to-school season at Culinary.net.

Pepperoni Pizza Sliders

Recipe adapted from MilkMeansMore.org

Ingredients:

1 package slider rolls

1/2 cup pizza sauce

1/2 cup mini pepperoni

1 1/2 cups shredded, low-moisture, part-skim mozzarella cheese

1/4 cup butter, melted

1 teaspoon parsley flakes

1/2 teaspoon dried oregano

1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

1/2 cup shredded Parmesan cheese nonstick cooking spray

Directions:

Heat oven to 350 F.

Keeping rolls connected, cut sheet of rolls horizontally, separating tops from bottoms. Place bottom halves of rolls in baking dish.

Spread pizza sauce evenly over bottom halves. Sprinkle pepperoni over sauce. Sprinkle mozzarella over pepperoni. Cover with top halves of rolls.

Mix melted butter with parsley flakes, dried oregano, garlic powder and shredded Parmesan cheese. Spoon evenly over sliders.

Cover baking dish with aluminum foil sprayed with nonstick cooking spray to keep cheese from sticking.

Bake 20 minutes.

Remove foil and bake additional 5-10 minutes, or until Parmesan is melted and golden brown.

Cut sliders and serve immediately.



Simple, Kid-Friendly Sliders

For those busy school nights when time is at a premium and you need to get a meal on the table quickly, these simple yet savory Pepperoni Pizza Sliders can be a perfect solution. A modified take on a kid favorite – pizza – they're easy to make after work and extracurricular activities to steal a few moments of family time enjoying the cheesy pepperoni goodness before completing homework and beginning preparations for a new day.



A Traditional Breakfast with a Twist

The same bowl of cereal can get boring after eating it for breakfast day in and day out. You may find yourself looking for something new and exciting to start school day mornings on the right foot.

Kids can be picky when it comes to breakfast foods, but this recipe for Sausage French Toast Roll-Ups is a quick and easy way to fill their bellies with a taste of several flavors they may already love. A sizzling sausage link wrapped with French toast, it combines a favorite breakfast protein and traditional deliciousness in one roll.

Sausage French Toast Roll-Ups

Ingredients:

12 sausage links

2 eggs

2/3 cup milk

3 teaspoons almond extract 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

6 bread slices, crust removed, cut in

half 3 tablespoons butter

Directions:

In skillet, cook sausage links according to package directions. Set aside.

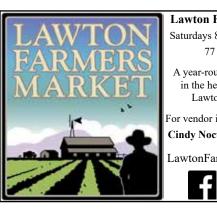
In medium bowl, whisk eggs, milk, almond extract and cinnamon.

Dip bread slice in egg mixture. Wrap bread slice around cooked sausage link, pressing seam to keep from unrolling. Repeat with remaining bread slices and sausage links.

In large skillet over medium-high heat, melt butter. Place roll-ups in skillet, seam-sides down, and cook until all sides are browned, approximately 10 minutes. Drizzle with syrup.



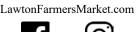




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A Fresh-Baked After-School Sweet

After a long day of learning or a tough homework assignment, many kids love a warm, chocolatey homemade cookie. Once your kiddos pack away the calculators and put their pencils down, serve up an ooey-gooey delight as a reward for all that hard work.

These Brown Butter Chocolate Chip Cookies are ready in just 30 minutes and made with high-quality ingredients you can count on like C&H Dark Brown Sugar for that familiar homemade flavor.

Find more sweet after-school desserts at chsugar.com.

Brown Butter Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredients:

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 1/4 cups C&H Dark Brown Sugar

2 large eggs, at room temperature

2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract 1 cup chopped pecans, toasted

1 1/2 cups semisweet chocolate

Directions:

In medium saucepan over medium heat, melt butter and cook until foaming and golden brown. Remove from heat and transfer to heatproof bowl. Place in refrigerator until solidified, about 45 minutes.

In a bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Set aside.

Once butter has solidified, remove from refrigerator. In bowl of electric stand mixer, using paddle attachment, beat butter and sugar at medium speed 2-3 minutes until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, and vanilla. Mix until combined. Scrape sides of bowl as needed. Reduce speed, add flour mixture and beat to combine. Add pecans and chocolate chips; mix at low speed until combined. Place dough in refrigerator and rest 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350 F and line baking sheets with parchment paper.

Using 2-ounce ice cream scoop, portion out dough on prepared baking sheets, spacing about 3 inches apart. Gently flatten dough balls using palm.

Bake 13-15 minutes, or until golden brown. Allow cookies to cool on baking sheets 10 minutes then transfer to wire rack. Serve warm.

Sipping on Summertime Sweets



Strawberry Spritzer

Ingredients:

1 package (10 ounces) frozen sliced strawberries, sweetened and thawed

2 liters lemon-lime soda, chilled 1 can (12 ounces) frozen pink lem-

Substitution: Ginger ale may be

onade concentrate, thawed

used in place of soda.

Directions:

In blender, process strawberries until blended thoroughly.

Pour strawberries into large pitcher; stir in soda and pink lemonade.

Serve immediately.

(Family Features) When it's summertime and you crave something cold and fruity, try using your favorite frozen fruit for a refreshing drink.

For example, strawberries with frozen pink lemonade concentrate combine to make a spritzer recipe worth sharing. This fizzy Strawberry Spritzer can delight your taste buds and keep you quenched while enjoying the summer sun.

Find more drink recipes at Culinary.net.

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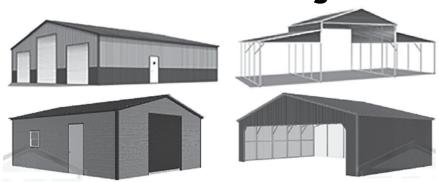
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LIVING ESTATE AUCTION

1103 West Cedar, Duncan, OK 73533 Saturday, August 19th, 2023 @ 10am Preview: Friday, August 18th, 2023 1pm-6pm

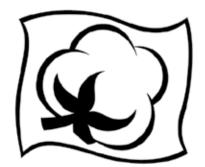
For Photos Go To Auctionzip.com and enter Auctioneer ID #17788 SCROGGINS AUCTION SERVICE has been commissioned to offer at public auction the Living Estate of Mr. Ed Caraway.

ITEMS: 1985 White Corvette, Yamabuggy XATV 400, 1945 Model B McCormick FarmAll Tractor, John Deere Plow 191 Horse Drawn, 17' Grumman Boat w/trailer & 50hp Evinrude motor w/a new Minnkota Trolling Motor, Trolling Motors, Fishing Equip., Camping Equip., 10' Stock Trailer. FIRE-ARMS: Stevens 410 Model B, J.C. Higgins 12 Gauge, Thompson Center .50 cal Muzzle Loader w/Tasco Scope, 303 British Pattern 1914 Enfield, J.C. Higgins 12 Gauge Model 66 Semi-Auto, Knight .50 cal Muzzle Loader w/Scope, CVA .45 cal Muzzle Loader, GAMO Swarm Whisper .22 cal Pellet w/Scope, Thompson Center .50 cal Muzzle Loader Penn. Hunting Carbine, Antique Single Shot 12 Gauge Shotgun, Ithaca Double Barrel Breakover 12 Gauge, New England Firearms Pardner Tracker II 12 Gauge w/Rifled Barrel, Nitro Hunter Single Shot 12 Gauge, M1944 7.62x54 cal Mosin Nagant, Mossburg 4D Tommy Hawk w/Scope, Hi-Point Firearms 40 Semi-Auto, S&W 38 Special, H&R Arms 38 Short, Jukar Derringer Muzzle Loader Black Powder Pistol, LOTS OF AMMUNITION BOWS: Locksley Recurve Bow, Bear Kids Bow, Barnett Vortex Compound Bow, Crossbow w/Scope. 5-Swords and 1-Bayonet. SHOP ITEMS: Miller Arc Welder, Propane Heater, Generator, Transmission Jack, Car Ramps, Power Tools, Sandblaster, 10" Craftsman Table Saw, Yard Machine Rototiller 5.5hp 12", Yard Machine Lawnmower 4.75hp 21" cut, Cherry Picker, Engine Stand, Dolly. ANTIQUE ITEMS: 6'x8' Texaco Sign, Fire Hydrant, 2 -Time-O-Matic (Time & Temp Sign), Railroad Crossing on Pole (Bell & Lights Work), 15" Cast Iron Bell, Texaco Letters, Old Pedal Car, Old Gas Pump, Stop Light, Old Weighing Scales, Lard Press, Antique Hand Water Pump, Pay Telephone, Dr. Weight Scales, Old Coffee Grinder, Dazey Churn, Tom's Peanut Cabinet, Handmade Spinning Wheel, Bread Box Radio, Antique Hand Crank Wall Phone, Whitney Piano, Gumball Machine, U.S. Postage Stamp Machine, Railroad Light, 2-Old Cash Register, Antique Sewing Machine, All Terrain Radio Flyer Wagon, 1900's Voice Recorder! MISC. SIGNS & LIGHTS: Pearl Lager, Coors, Coors-Light, Schlitz, Budweiser, Old Milwaukee, Michelob, Falstaff, Stroh, Firestone, Liberty-Owens-Ford Glass Sign, Havoline Oil Clock. **COCA-COLA ITEMS:** Coke Box (Runs), Old Coke Box, Coke Mirror, Coke Bottles, Coca-Cola Coke Bottle Sign, Lots of Misc. Coke Items. MISC ITEMS: 3-Slot Machines, Pinball Machine, Saddle Bags, Old Century Fan, Bakers Rack, Glass Peanut/Candy Jars, Old Radio, Grandfather Clock, Insulators, Display Case, Erector Sets, Hotdog Machine, Popcorn Machine, Wooden Buffet, Fireplace Set, Acoustic Guitars, 2-Old Display Dolls, Drum Set, Ping Pong Table, Lots & Lots of Misc Items!!

Lots of unique and hard to find items in this auction. More items than advertised. You don't want to miss this one!

AUCTIONEERS MESSAGE: Announcements made day of sale supersede any previous advertisements. Everything sells **AS-IS, WHERE-IS! TERMS & CONDITIONS OF SALE:** Cash, Personal Check and Company Checks accepted with valid ID. **BUYERS:** YOU MUST PROVIDE a copy of Sales Tax Permit the day of Sale to avoid sales tax

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SPOT THE BIGGEST **ENERGY USER**

We use electricity every day, but we rarely think about the appliances and electronics that consume the most energy. Can you spot the biggest energy users?

Review each grouping below, then circle the one that you think consumes the most energy. Check your work in the answer key.



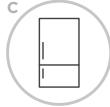


1.

- A) Heating and Cooling Unit
- B) Clothes Washer
- **C)** Refrigerator





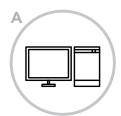


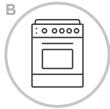
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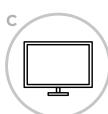
- A) Refrigerator
- B) Water Heater
- C) Laptop Computer

3.

- A) Desktop Computer
- B) Electric Oven
- C) TV



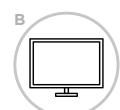




4.

- A) LED Lights
- B) TV
- **C)** Clothes Dryer







Answer Key: 7. A 2. B 3. B 4. C



Save Energy!

- Wash clothing in cold water and air-dry when possible. Only run full loads in the dishwasher.
- Turn off lights when you leave a room.
- Take short showers instead of baths.
- Unplug electronic devices when not in use.

	8	9		5				1
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	9			6		2		

Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



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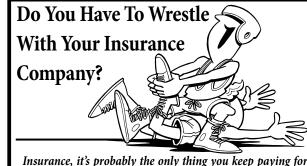
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Parting Shot



Cotton Electric Energy Efficiency Coordinator Heath Morgan pauses for the camera while inspecting an attic during a home energy efficiency evaluation. Photo by Zach Young.



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Directions: 3 miles west on Fuller Rd. to Johnson Rd., then North on Johnson



Antiques & Collectibles: Jokers Wild slot machine, Coca Cola sign, Dr. Pepper machine, Coke machine.



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